

*Excerpt from a text by the late writer and lyricist Vanda Koutsokosta, written on the occasion of Vasiliki Kateri's solo exhibition titled "GAIES" at the cultural venue of METAICHMIO Publications in Athens (20 January – 27 February 2010).*

**The “sugar” and the “salt” of the earth, the materials of decay and incorruptibility, the point of departure for inspiration and creation, through the work of the Epirote visual artist Vasiliki Kateri.**

This warm gathering concluded with an encounter of acquaintance with the artist and her works in the exhibition space, where anyone who allowed themselves, even briefly, to wander through the paths of her creation — through the magic of abstraction, the delicate, almost invisible line of multiple layers of interpretation, and the romantic inclination to explore the visible and invisible dimensions of the world and the values of life hidden behind and beneath them — could find themselves within the landscapes of her homeland, recalling memories and becoming enchanted.

Then one would surely discover how the pain of nostalgia is transformed into inspiration and creation... How the journey to Ithaca is not merely a return, but a perpetual quest for the art of living...

One would undoubtedly agree with the deeper meaning of these creations: that the course of life, both within and beyond existence, is reciprocal and continuous, with the point of origin claiming more significance than the destination; as ambiguous as the dominion of the earth over us, while life and death both lay claim to us in an eternal struggle. Within the same cycle and with the same force, they hold and revolve us. Sowing, sprouting, birth, death. Destination and origin, beginning and end — the earth.

Perhaps this is why the artist uses as her materials the sugar and the salt of the earth, those elements that signify its decay yet also symbolize its incorruptibility. Tree bark, ash and sand, fragments of shells and roots constitute for her not only the primary

material of her technique, but also that which inspires her through the dynamic power of the images, colors, and shades they contain; through the alternations and surprises of nature to which they allude, enabling her to stand humbly in their shadow and, through greatness of spirit, lead existence toward the deciphering of meaning.

The “Gaies” (Earths) of Vasiliki Kateri are the journey within ourselves, the descent into our unfathomable depths, the passage through our inner Symplegades, self-knowledge. The understanding of Being and its distinction from mere existence; the deeper essence of existence and its higher value.

And then, the voyage across the turbulent oceans of life, the encounter with the “being” and the truth of others, the touching of souls.

It is handmade beauty, shaped from incorruptible yet living materials. And one wonders — how is it possible? How can they preserve life untouched within their core while death has conquered them so many times? And yet, it is possible...

Because they are earth and water, and neither do the cliffs vanish, nor does the river run dry.

They are traces of autumn, drawn into dance by the exhilarated wind; ash and roots and bark, fruits of the earth and shell dust, gathered in anger and scattered upon the roads. But it is the wind — and you cannot turn it back...

You can only, if you wish and if you are initiated, listen to the whispers of the earth within its deep silence, hear its pentatonic melodies and its polyphony, follow the skipping dance of the river and the ribbons of the wind among the hanging beehives.